

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on December 10, 2008, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 2-5, and 11-15 have been cancelled, claims 1 and 6-10 have been amended and claims 16-29 have been added. No new matter has been added. As a result, claims 1, 6-10 and 16-29 are now pending in this application, with claims 1, 6 and 24 being independent.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 – Kalkunte

Claim 1, 3-6, 8-11 and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2002/0027908 to Kalkunte et al. (hereinafter “Kalkunte”). Applicant has amended the claims to obviate this rejection.

Claim 1, as amended, recites:

A method of handling frames in a network device, said method comprising:
receiving a frame at a first network device of an assembly of network devices divided into a first trunk group on a first side and a second trunk group on a second side, wherein the assembly includes a plurality of high-speed links connecting the first side to the second side, and wherein the first network device is on the first side and a member of the first trunk group;

determining whether the frame is destined for a network device of the first trunk group or a second network device of the second trunk group;

if the frame is destined for the second network device, forwarding the frame to the second side via a first high-speed link of the plurality of high-speed links connecting the first side to the second side, wherein the first high-speed link is local to the second network device; and

if the frame is not destined for one of the network devices of the second trunk group, forwarding the frame from the first network device to a network device of the first side to which the frame is destined. (emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection because Kalkunte fails to describe or suggest “assembly of network devices divided into a first trunk group on a first side and a second trunk group on a second side” or “if the frame is destined for a second network device of the second side, forwarding the frame to the second side via a first link of the plurality of links connecting the first side to the second side, wherein the first link is local to the second network device” (emphasis added), as recited in claim 1 as amended.

Kalkunte, as cited by the Office Action p.3-4, only discloses that “... a particular trunked port of the trunk group is determined and the incoming data packet is forwarded thereto” and that “... selecting the particular trunk port [is] based on the hash value.” Kalkunte fails to disclose a

first side and a second side, links connecting the first side to the second side, and/or forwarding a frame via link local to the second device to which the frame is destined. Applicant further submits that Varansi, as cited by the Office Action, either alone or in combination with Kalkunte fails to remedy the shortcomings of Kalkunte as described above.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 6 and 23 include features similar to those discussed above with regard to independent claim 1 and are allowable for at least similar reasons. Applicant further submits that claims 8 and 9, by virtue of their dependence on independent claim 6, overcome the rejection for at least similar reasons as those discussed above. Applicant further submits that claims 3-5 and 11-15 have been cancelled and requests the rejection be withdrawn with respect to these claims.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 – Kalkunte in view of Varansi

Claims 2, 7 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kalkunte in view of U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2005/0105904 to Varansi et al. (hereinafter “Varansi”). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2 and 12 have been cancelled and that claim 7, as amended, overcomes this rejection based at least on its dependence of independent claim 6, as amended for the reasons discussed above.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims 1, 6-10 and 16-29 are in condition for allowance and requests withdrawal of the claims as rejected above and that the claims be allowed.

No fees are believed to be due, however, if necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3521.

Respectfully submitted,

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